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VERIFICATION IN ALL ITS ASPECTS, INCLUDING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE FIELD OF VERIFICATION

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 9 December 1992, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/45 entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", paragraphs 1 to 4 of which read as follows:

> "The General Assembly,
>
> "...
>
> "1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on actions to implement the recommendations of the in-depth study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification;
>
> "2. Encourages Member States to continue to give active consideration to the recommendations contained in the concluding chapter of the study and to assist the Secretary-General in their implementation where appropriate;
>
> "3. Requests the Secretary-General, as a follow-up to the study on the role of the United Nations in the field of verification and in view of significant developments in international relations since that study, to seek the views of Member States on:
>
> "(a) Additional actions that might be taken to implement the recommendations contained in the study;
>
> "(b) How the verification of arms limitation and disarmament agreements can facilitate United Nations activities with respect to preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building;
>
> "(c) Additional actions with respect to the role of the United Nations in the field of verification, including further studies by the United Nations on this subject;
>
> "4. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on the subject to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session;
>
> "..."

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 47/45.

3. In accordance with the request contained in General Assembly resolution 47/45, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale dated 15 January 1993, requested Member States to provide him with the relevant information mentioned in paragraph 3 of the resolution. Information has been received thus far from Canada. The information is reproduced in section II. Any additional information received from Member States will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

CANADA

[Original: English]

[14 June 1993]

1. The United Nations has addressed the subject of "verification in all its aspects" since 1985. In large measure, the focus of this attention has been on verifying formally negotiated and legally binding treaties dealing with the reduction or limitation of armaments. With the demise of the cold war, as well as events surrounding the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war, international attention is now focusing on verification in a variety of contexts that go beyond the traditional focus on such "arms control" treaties. These contexts include the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems; destabilizing accumulations of conventional weapons; reciprocated unilateral measures of disarmament; enforced disarmament or arms limitation under Security Council resolutions; and efforts to regulate military forces as part of specific conflict management activities. Within these contexts - which collectively might be termed the "control of arms" - there is a shared focus on measures to regulate armaments or military forces, on a requirement for increased transparency, and on a requirement that compliance be monitored. With these developments in mind, it seems prudent, from Canada's perspective, for the United Nations to update its exploration of the verification process through a new Group of Experts study that truly addresses verification in all its aspects, building upon the work already accomplished.

2. The significant changes in today's international environment have important consequences for thinking about controlling arms and verification. Among these changes are the following:

(a) A heightened concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and weapons technology, as well as excessive and destabilizing build-ups of conventional weapons;

(b) A growing recognition that the resolution of regional and local conflicts, including intra-State hostilities, will be critical to progress in achieving wider international peace and security in the future;

(c) An emerging consensus that the role of multilateral processes and institutions for peace and security, particularly the United Nations, must and can be enhanced.

3. Unprecedented demands are being placed on international institutions, especially the United Nations, as the world community attempts to come to grips with new challenges to international peace and security. In Canada's view, an indispensable part of the solutions to these challenges will involve new approaches to controlling arms and monitoring compliance with such undertakings.

4. In the post-cold war international environment there seems to be general consensus that formal arms limitation and disarmament agreements (such as treaties) remain important vehicles for enhancing security, and that monitoring

compliance with such formal undertakings will be an ongoing requirement. Since 1985, significant new arms control agreements, particularly multilateral ones, have been concluded. New formal agreements can be expected. It is no longer true that experience with multilateral arms control verification is limited.

5. There will likely also be increasing resort to informal arrangements to control arms, including unilateral undertakings and reciprocal actions. Whether and how compliance with such undertakings will be monitored remains largely unexplored.

6. As represented by two seminal reports of the Secretary-General, the report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277-S/24111) and the report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold war era" (A/C.1/47/7) - the process of controlling arms and its concomitant verification dimension are increasingly seen in the broader context of their contribution to international peace and security. In the past, all too often, such efforts were seen narrowly, as restricted exclusively to formal, legally binding international agreements, although these will continue to be important. From this developing perspective, the control of arms is an important conflict resolution tool that can contribute meaningfully towards building a new international order; one that is based on a more activist approach to the preservation of international peace and security, particularly by the United Nations, and one characterized by a stronger commitment to a global rule of law and to cooperative solutions. Canada is generally supportive of the views contained in these two reports.

7. In the report entitled "An Agenda for Peace", preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building are identified as key aims for United Nations efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts and for the preservation of peace. In Canada's view, efforts to control arms and verification can contribute meaningfully to each of these aims.

8. On a conceptual level, several common ideas are shared between, on the one hand, preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building, and, on the other, traditional ideas about arms control and disarmament. Among these is enhanced access to information about military forces, deployments and intentions - in a word, "transparency". Another important linking idea is the effect of synergies. Multiple independent sources of information make transparency more convincing. Confidence building is an important linking idea too. Through credible evidence of compliance, the parties can come increasingly to trust each other; good faith can be demonstrated. A further important linking idea is the detection of non-compliance. Once detected, appropriate actions can be taken by the parties involved in the conflict or by the United Nations, up to and including the Security Council, to address the violations. Self-protection and the maintenance of peace and security depend on effective methods to detect non-compliance.

9. In addition to conflict prevention/resolution, concern about proliferation of modern weapons is an increasing focus of efforts to control arms. The report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold war era" expresses the hope, which Canada supports, that:

"Over the longer term, ... we may achieve more equitable and comprehensive approaches to responsible proliferation control, not only of weapons, but also of long-range delivery systems and dual-use technologies." (para. 29)

These more equitable and comprehensive approaches to proliferation control must also incorporate adequate and effective verification components, in Canada's view.

10. Another aspect of evolving thinking about the process of controlling arms in the post-cold war environment is a renewed emphasis on the harmonization of regional arrangements and agencies in the pursuit of international peace and security. Several levels of effort, each complementing and reinforcing the others seem to be involved. At the most general, there are global processes and agreements that seek to involve all States. The next level narrows the focus to particular groups of States within defined regions of the world. As suggested in the "New dimensions ..." report, it is possible to further refine arms limitation and disarmament efforts to focus on "subregions" or what might be called local processes. Finally, in the post-cold war world, it is possible to go beyond the subregion to encompass intra-State processes and agreements that address the control of arms.

11. How the linkages between these different levels of controlling arms - global, regional, local, intra-State - will evolve is not clear. There seems, however, to be a growing recognition of the importance of these relationships and the need to address them in a more systematic and explicit way. It is likely that such linkages will involve significant verification components. Further exploration of the opportunities, costs and benefits of such linkages as they affect verification and the role of the United Nations therein, might well be timely.

12. As thinking about the process of controlling arms and its concomitant verification component continues to evolve, it is important to adapt and build upon the work already accomplished by the United Nations in this field. In the last eight years, the United Nations has achieved a number of important milestones relating to verification. It has provided valuable leadership in building an international consensus on the essential nature of the verification of arms control agreements through adoption without vote of a number of General Assembly resolutions beginning in 1985, through the work of the Disarmament Commission in 1987 and 1988, which developed a set of 16 consensus verification principles, and through the comprehensive report in 1990 of the Group of Qualified Governmental Experts to undertake a Study on the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Verification (A/45/372 and Corr.1). The United Nations has also undertaken important operational duties respecting the monitoring of compliance with undertakings to control arms. These include activities relating to allegations of non-compliance with the 1925 Geneva Protocol respecting the use of chemical and biological weapons, obligations under Security Council resolutions and various peace-keeping operations. With the major changes in the international system, as well as increasing hands-on experience in designing and implementing verification systems, it is now appropriate to renew the exploration of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification in all its aspects.

13. In its 1990 report, the Group of Experts concluded that a more peaceful international system should have, as one of its main pillars, arms limitation and disarmament agreements with effective verification measures in which all States can have confidence. Given the essential role of verification in arms limitation and disarmament, the United Nations will need to address the multilateral aspects of verification with increasing attention as multilateral negotiations grow in importance. The Group also acknowledged that the significant changes then occurring in East/West relations could well overtake the Group's projections and suggest new approaches for United Nations involvement in verification. The United Nations has unique strengths, such as its virtually universal membership, that make it well suited to undertaking certain activities with respect to verification.

14. The Group of Experts outlined its conclusions and recommendations under six subheadings: data collection capability, exchanges between experts and diplomats, the role of the Secretary-General in fact-finding and other activities, use of aircraft for verification purposes, use of satellites and towards an international verification system.

15. Canada continues to support the recommendations and conclusions contained in the 1990 report. In terms of data collection, Canada has made several submissions to support the development of a United Nations consolidated data bank of published materials and data on all aspects of verification.

16. Regarding exchanges between experts and diplomats, Canada supports the Group's recommendation that the United Nations promote workshops, seminars and training programmes on verification and compliance, including in areas of its unique experience, such as peace-keeping and compliance with a number of Security Council resolutions. Work in this area undertaken on a national basis can also contribute significantly to the effectiveness - and the cost-effectiveness - of the verification process.

17. The Group of Experts recognized that the Secretary-General's fact-finding experience could be helpful with respect to those arms control agreements lacking explicit verification provisions. Strengthening his fact-finding capabilities is dependent on the mandate he is given and must be made on a case-by-case basis.

18. It is important to note in this context, the recent focused monitoring activities undertaken by the United Nations as a result of a number of Security Council resolutions. This aspect of the verification process was unanticipated when the Group of Experts study was completed. Although this experience has been of relatively short duration and its responsibilities are the product of concise Security Council resolutions (not of a prolonged negotiation), there are striking similarities to other multilateral contexts, particularly in terms of operational process and procedure, from the accumulation of baseline data, through the reduction/destruction phase, to the problems related to future compliance. It is quite possible that other verification activities may be authorized by the United Nations in the future along these lines as well as fact-finding missions or peace-keeping operations. It is timely and appropriate, therefore, to explore in greater detail the conceptual, organizational and operational lessons provided by United Nations experience in

the intervening period and to update and remain current with changes in a rapidly evolving environment.

19. The Group of Experts did not make any specific recommendations in 1990 with regard to the use of aircraft for verification. It should be noted, however, that since the time of their report the relevance of aerial surveillance for verification-related activities has been highlighted by several important developments. These include the use by the United Nations of aerial imagery, the call by the United Nations for the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) to monitor no-fly zones in the former Yugoslavia using Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) aircraft, the ongoing use of aircraft by the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai Peninsula and the signing of the Open Skies Treaty.

20. The beneficial use of aircraft in verification contexts is thus becoming increasingly recognized. This powerful tool can be applied effectively for monitoring compliance with traditional negotiated arms control agreements or with undertakings related to controlling arms in specific conflict prevention/resolution situations. As the United Nations is called upon to be active in controlling arms, new avenues for improving the effectiveness of compliance monitoring should be explored.

21. No recommendations were made regarding the use of satellites by the Group of Experts in their 1990 report. There have been a number of notable developments in this regard since then, including the growing movement by a regional organization - the Western European Union - to develop a multilateral verification satellite capability, and the provision of verification-related information from national sources (including national technical means) in the United Nations context. Improvements in commercial satellite resolutions and the increasing number of commercial satellite sources are other notable developments in this area.

22. The 1990 Group of Experts made no specific recommendations concerning the development of an international verification system, though it did note that such development was dependent on further changes in the political environment and on the verification requirements emerging from continued advances in arms control. Canada shares these views and continues to have reservations about the rationale for an immediate start-up of an "umbrella" verification body under the United Nations. In contrast, there are much stronger reasons to support multilateral verification (including a role for international organizations) in narrower issue-specific or region-specific contexts. This being said, Canada is cognizant of the implications of the changing international political environment. The role of the United Nations in verification can not help but be affected by the evolution of conceptual and political thinking about the process of controlling arms and verification.

23. In response to General Assembly resolution 47/45, Canada submits that many of the recommendations of the 1990 Group of Experts study have been overtaken by international political events. The 1990 Group of Experts study did excellent work, a great deal of which remains highly relevant even in the new international environment in which the United Nations finds itself. It built upon a number of previous United Nations accomplishments in constructing an important international consensus on verification. However, a number of the

Group's findings were affected by political constraints that were still inherent in the final days of the cold war. In Canada's view, a follow-on study to that of the 1990 Group of Experts would be timely and useful. Such a follow-on study would build upon the work of the 1990 study, not duplicate it. It would provide a vehicle for the Secretary-General and Member States to be kept abreast of emerging developments and help ensure a pro-active leadership role for the United Nations in the field of verification that expands upon today's international consensus on the subject. The proposed follow-on study would not impinge upon Security Council jurisdiction with regard to its actions relating to non-proliferation and the control of arms.

24. Canada, therefore, suggests that a follow-on study, to be submitted to the fiftieth session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1995, be undertaken. Such a follow-on study might:

(a) Review the lessons from recent United Nations verification experience, as well as other international developments relating to verification, for future United Nations activities in the field of verification;

(b) Examine how verification can contribute to United Nations activities with respect to conflict prevention/resolution;

(c) Identify ways that the United Nations can promote verification synergies and harmonization among agreements to control arms;

(d) Explore the interrelationships and mutually supportive elements concerning involvement by the United Nations in verification in global, regional, local and intra-State contexts.

25. The control of arms - including negotiated arms limitation and disarmament agreements, constraints on proliferation as well as conflict management activities - are central to the new global security agenda. Social and economic progress, in large measure, ultimately will be determined by our success in enhancing international peace and security. In Canada's view, adequate and effective verification is an essential ingredient to ensuring the credibility of these security efforts. The demise of the cold war and events in the Persian Gulf as well as other parts of the world, have provided radically new opportunities and challenges for creating a more just and peaceful world. Canada is convinced that the United Nations must be at the heart of this process if we are to succeed, and that the United Nations role in the field of verification, in all its aspects, represents an important element in addressing these opportunities and challenges.